# OWENS: Sharpest criticism reserved for veto

FROM PAGE 1

an Community Center. "I do not believe that Gov. Owens has been terribly supportive of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues during his term in office. What happened today is not terribly surprising."

Owens said he let HB1014 become law without his endorsement because it includes "important criminal justice legislation."

In addition to expanding the groups covered under hate crimes, HB1014 beefs up the ability of law enforcement and district attorneys to investigate and prosecute threats against public schools.

"I have historically and consistently opposed hate crimes legislation, as it creates a perception that crimes against a certain category of citizens are somehow more reprehensible than crimes against everyone else," Owens wrote in a letter explaining his decision.

Colorado's hate crime law had covered race, color, religion or national origin. The law lets prosecutors throw stiffer penalties at those who commit crimes — from assault to murder — if prejudice is a motive.

The governor's critics point out there are other special protected classes within state law.

"Apparently, as far as the governor is concerned, it is OK to have a special penalty when a police dog is maimed or injured but not when a Colorado citizen is targeted because of their sexual orientation," said Rep. Terrance Carroll, D-Denver.

Critics, however, reserved their sharpest criticism for Owens' veto of SB28.

"He is really voting against equality for gay folks, and it's unfortunate," Devocelle said.

Owens said he vetoed SB28 because he thought it would increase frivolous lawsuits against employers.

He added that he feared the measure would have been interpreted to require employers to provide benefits to same-sex couples.

### ALREADY VETOED

**Senate Bill 28 -** Would have barred employers from firing gay men and lesbians and transvestites because of their sexual orientation.

**House Bill 1042 -** Would have required hospitals to give rape victims information about emergency contraception.

**House Bill 1061 -** Would have expanded the rights of tenants by capping late rent fees and decreasing the amount of time a landlord could keep a security deposit.

### FACING POTENTIAL VETO

**Senate Bill 203 -** Would make it nearly impossible for a private toll road to be built in Colorado by banning the use of condemnation by developers.

**Senate Bill 100 -** Would diminish the power of homeowners associations.

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which covers 70 square miles in Argentina.

The observatory would be made up of an array of particle

Baca, Bent and Prowers counties. It would be based at Lamar Community College, where a visitor center would

# VERDICT: Jury decla responsible for his o

FROM PAGE 1

Gary Loveless, 50, went to the hospital March 16, 2002, requesting hospice admission and pain treatment for terminal cancer. He was given a painkiller, Stadol, and died when his heart and breathing stopped.

The Lovelesses claimed Webb shouldn't have given their son a Stadol injection without first determining how drunk he was. They also claimed that Webb and ER nurses were at fault because they incorrectly believed he did not want to be revived.

An autopsy determined Loveless had a blood-alcohol content of 0.348 percent, more than four times the legal limit for drunken driving, and did not have cancer.

The jury found no negligence on Webb's part. It found that the hospital was negligent but that Gary Loveless was far more responsible for his death because he apparently lied to doctors and nurses about his condition.

Colorado law does not allow plaintiffs to recover damages if their own negligence exceeds that of the defendant. The jury found the hospital 3 percent at fault for Loveless' death and found Loveless 97 percent to blame.

Webb hugged his attorney

STATE LEGISLATURE

# Gays win one, lose one on Owens' pen

By KYLE HENLEY
THE GAZETTE

**DENVER** • Gay rights advocates had to be satisfied with one out of two Friday when Gov. Bill Owens vetoed an anti-discrimination measure but let another become law.

Owens let House Bill 1014, which adds gays and lesbians to the protected groups under Colorado's hate crimes law, become law without his signature, meaning he opposes the bill but chose not to veto it.

But he vetoed Senate Bill 28, which would have barred Colorado employers from firing people on the basis of sexual orientation and those of variant genders, or dress, such as transvestites.

"It's one of those interesting situations," said Linda Devocelle, executive director of the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbi-

SEE **OWENS** • PAGE 5

## VETOES

Gov. Bill Owens has vetoed 24 bills from the 2005 General Assembly session, the highest number during his tenure. His previous record was 14 vetoes in 2001. Owens is closing in on Gov. Roy Romer's 1997 veto record of 27 bills. There are still 165 bills on his desk awaiting action, and more vetoes are likely. Inside, a look at some of the bills he's vetoed and a few that could face defeat by his pen. **Metro 5**

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